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ABSTRACT

In March 1989, the Kentucky Department of Education assembled a task force to make recommendations regarding the issue of teaching values and character in public schools in Kentucky. The 23-member task force represented educators, parents, the legislature, state and local school boards, law enforcement agencies, higher education, Catholic archdioceses, and three private institutes. Subgroups of compatible individuals were formed with the aid to the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS). The RVS presents two alphabetized sets of 18 conceptions of desirable terminal values that represent the ultimate end goals of existence and instrumental values consisting of behavioral means of achieving these goals. The process requires subjects to arrange the two sets of values in terms of the importance of the concepts as guiding principles in their lives. Eighteen members of the task force completed the RVS. The universality of the RVS, its inability to deal with individuals' intensities of feeling, and its generation of ipsative, ordinal data with limited applicability have been criticized. Nevertheless, the RVS met the needs of establishing the comparability of the task force and determining internal cohesion among members. Results of the administration of the RVS indicate that the group was sufficiently correlated to the most recent national samples and had higher internal similarity than that of the three major religious groupings in the United States. The instrument also aided in assessing group dynamics. (TJH)

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COMPARING THE VALUES HIERARCHY OF THE KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S CHARACTER / VALUES TASK FORCE

Comparing a Character / Values Task Force to a National Sample

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In March of 1989 the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) assembled a task force to examine and make recommendations regarding the issue of teaching values and character in the Commonwealth's public schools. The group was to spend several months considering individual values in an effort to identify an appropriate list around which to base a curriculum and then develop or recommend one.

The group did not reflect a cross-section of Kentucky's citizens but consisted of assorted individuals and groups who had expressed an interest in the topic to the superintendent of public instruction. The 23 members represented various groups of educators and parents, the legislature, state and local school boards, law enforcement agencies, higher education, Catholic archdioceses and three other groups -- the Rutherford Institute, the Lincoln Foundation and the Eagle Forum.

The Rutherford Institute defines itself as "a national non-profit organization that carries on educational and litigation activities in defense of free speech, unborn life, religious freedom, family liberties and Christian values". The mission statement of the Lincoln Foundation is "to sponsor and promote programs in human relations and education". Presently, the board of directors oversees and supports programs for elementary through high school focusing on leadership, personal development and career orientation. In addition, this foundation offers older minorities scholarship assistance for professional school. The Eagle Forum, a national organization sharing conservative and pro-family values, is comprised of citizen volunteers who attempt to influence public policymaking and encourage political participation.

Since the task force's composition was not random and since the division of research staffed it, we decided to compare the task force's value choices to the most recent national samples and to examine the degree of similarity between members. We also wanted to ensure that the group worked smoothly and effectively. Since the chair decided that the bulk of the work was to be done in smaller groups, we needed

to determine which individuals were more compatible. The division selected the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS) to make these comparisons and aid with our grouping strategy.

The RVS (Rokeach 1973) presents two alphabetized sets of 18 conceptions of the desirable--terminal values which represent the ultimate end goals of existence and instrumental values which are the behavioral means for achieving the end or terminal goals. To complete the survey, participants arrange the two sets of values one to 18 in terms of their importance to them as guiding principles in their lives. The process requires 10 to 20 minutes. The most effective use of the survey data involves determining the median rank given to each value by the surveyed group and establishing the group's average value rankings using the medians. This process allows the desired comparisons to be made providing that the other group's rankings were completed the same way.

In the early stages of the survey's development, Rokeach (1967) anticipated that it would provide information about value stability and change at the individual and the cultural level, and he has evaluated American value priorities in terms of this concept (Rokeach 1974, Rokeach and Rokeach-Ball 1989). In those intervening years, Rokeach and other social scientists have used the survey to examine and draw conclusions about value choice according to gender, race, income level, educational level, vocation and other areas. Specifically, Sikula, Jurs and Sikula (1972) have examined value choices of various levels and types of teachers and Sikula and Sikula (1972) have compared value choices of education administrators to 11 other occupational/career and managerial groups using the RVS and have shown significant differences. The RVS has established and maintained its credibility and utility over the last 22 years because it gives researchers a common frame of reference.

Despite the instrument's longevity, researchers have consistently identified two flaws. Kitwood and Smithers (1975) typify these when they observe among

other points that it does not reflect the totality of humankind's value system nor the intensity with which the subject holds each value and that the RVS produces ipsative, ordinal data which limits its applicability. Feather (1973); Rankin and Grube (1980); Chapman, Blackburn, Austin and Hutcheson (1983); and Miethe (1985) have attempted to address these issues by various statistical procedures which have weakened rather than strengthened the instrument. Even Rokeach (1973) has endorsed some of these artifices.

The division of research found that the shortcomings researchers identified and questionable procedures taken to address them were not relevant to the instrument's usefulness. The RVS met our needs--establishing the comparability of the KDE's character/values task force, determining internal cohesion among its members and performing cluster analysis for insight into subcommittee assignments. Thompson, Levitov and Miedeihoff (1982), critics of many aspects of the RVS, concede that the instrument is appropriate for examining value choice, and the earlier mentioned critic Kitwood (1978) recommends it as a "general probe into values for use with respondents whose academic attainment is average or above".

Nineteen of the 23 task force members attempted the survey. One individual could not complete it, and the unfinished survey revealed indecision and confusion. Table 1 compares their responses to the most recent national samples assembled by Inglehart (1985). The 1971 data came from a National Opinion Research Center (NORC) sample and the 1981 data from a University of Michigan Institute of Social Research (ISR) sample. The most disparate instrumental values were self-controlled, polite, ambitious and clean. The task force found the first two far more important and the last far less important. They also found obedient more important and capable and broadminded less. Despite the large differences on these seven rankings, a Spearman rank order correlation coefficient (Rho) (Downie and Heath 1970) showed .57, a moderate level of correlation. Reviewing the terminal

values reveals great difference between salvation, inner harmony and world at peace with the first being more important and the second two less. Significant difference existed between equality, freedom and happiness as well with the KDE group identifying the first as more important and the latter two as less. The Rho reflected a correlation of .66. Both are significant beyond .01 level.

To determine the likeness within the group, we used Kendall's coefficient of concordance (W) (Downie and Heath 1970) which revealed a .41 for the instrumental values and a .38 for the terminal which are significant beyond the .1 level. These figures indicate a somewhat diverse group and low to moderate correlation. Rokeach (1973) reports Ws for Jews, Catholics, Protestants and the nonreligious of .37, .28, .28 and .24 respectively for instrumental and .21, .16, .21 and .20 for the terminal, so the task force has a higher degree of internal likeness than these major religious groupings.

As the task force moved toward its goals of identifying a list of values and preparing a curriculum around them, their chair determined that they should work on the latter in five smaller groups. To gain some perception into similarity between individuals, we performed cluster analysis using Statistical Analysis System (SAS) (Ray 1982) cluster. This process produced one individual on the instrumental and one on the terminal values who was grouped alone at the far edge of the clusters. Interestingly enough, the two groups which contained these outliers experienced higher levels of frustration and required more time to complete their assignments. Three groups with no outliers completed their work in one attempt; both groups with outliers required three sessions. Of the two, the group that needed a great deal more curricular expertise included the individual who failed to complete the survey.

The division of research has concluded that using the RVS has facilitated work with the KDE's task force. The practical strengths of the instrument made it ideal for comparing our group's value choices. It enabled us to establish that the

Kentucky group was sufficiently correlated to the most recent national samples and had higher internal similarity than that of three major religious denominations. Finally, the survey provided an understanding of our group's dynamics which aided in effective subgroupings. This work illustrates that the RVS can be used in situations where values are important to group assignments.

TABLE 1

Average Rankings of 18 Instrumental and 18 Terminal Values of KDE Task Force in 1989 and Two Most Recent National Samples

Instrumental Value	Rank KY GP	Rank Com GP	Terminal Value	Rank KY GP	Rank Com GP
honest	1	1	self respect	1	4
responsible	2	2	salvation	2	9
helpful	3	7	family security	3	1
self controlled	4	11	sense of accomp	4	7
forgiving	5	4	inner harmony	5	13
loving	6	8	wisdom	6	6
polite	7	14	equality	7	12
courageous	8	6	freedom	8	10
independent	9	12	true friendship	9	3
obedient	10	16	happiness	10	5
broadminded	11	5	mature love	11	14
ambitious	12	3	world at peace	12	2
intellectual	13	15	world of beauty	13	16
logical	14	17	national security	14	11
capable	15	9	an exciting life	15	15
imaginative	16	18	social recognition	16	18
cheerful	17	13	pleasure	17	17
clean	18	10	a comfortable life	18	8

Note: National data comes from representative national samples of adult Americans by NORC in 1971 (N=1430) and by ISR in 1981 (N=933) (Inglehart 1985).

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